



# Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

*An Internationally Accredited Public Safety Agency*

## NEWS ADVISORY

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### **Splash into Summer Safely Keep these Water Safety Tips in Mind**

As the weather heats up, chances are you will be headed to the beach or pool to cool off this summer. Whether you're a seasoned swimmer or just learning how to swim, many water-related accidents can be avoided by knowing what to do and how to stay safe. Drowning is the second leading killer of children ages 14 and under and the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service urges residents to review these important tips to increase safety around the water:

- **Learn to swim and never swim alone.** One of the best things you can do to stay safe around the water is to learn to swim and to always swim with a buddy. Even experienced swimmers can become tired or get muscle cramps which might make it difficult to get out of the water safely.
- **Learn life-saving skills.** Know how to prevent, recognize and respond to emergencies. Valuable lifesaving seconds are lost by having to wait for Emergency Medical Services to respond and administer CPR. Learning CPR and other life-saving skills and rescue techniques can save lives.
- **Seconds count when it comes to water emergencies.** Keep a phone (cell or cordless) by the pool or nearby when engaged in recreational water activities so that you can call 9-1-1 in an emergency.
- **Don't rely on swimming lessons, life preservers or other equipment to make a child "water safe."** Remember - swimming lessons are no substitute for supervision of children. Formal swimming lessons can help protect young swimmers around the water however constant adult supervision is critical.
- **Never leave children unsupervised around water** (bathtubs, pools, ornamental backyard ponds, etc.). Small children don't think of water as a danger and, by nature, are very curious.
- **Diving dangers.** Diving injuries can cause permanent spinal damage, injuries and even death. Protect yourself by diving only in areas that are known to be safe, such as the deep

end of a supervised pool. Always check the water's depth and remember that jumping in feet first can be very risky if you haven't checked the water for rocks or other hidden hazards.

- **Pay attention to local weather conditions and forecasts.** Stop swimming at the first indication of bad weather.
- **Know Your Limits.** Watch for the “dangerous too’s” . . . too tired, too cold, too far from safety, too much sun, too much strenuous activity.
- **Maintain constant supervision of children.** Know where your children are at all times. Never leave a child unattended in the water or pool area. Don't be distracted by phone calls, chores or conversations. If you leave the pool area, take the child with you.
- **Don't rely on substitutes.** The use of floatation devices, water wings and inflatable toys can not replace parental supervision. Such flotation devices could suddenly shift position, lose air, or slip out from underneath, leaving the child in a dangerous situation.
- **Water and alcohol don't mix.** Each year, up to half of all adult drownings are linked to alcohol use.

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